



Representative Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules
Representing New York's 28th District

PRESS RELEASE

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Rep. Slaughter Introduces Legislation to Increase Research on the Impact of our Environment on Women's Health

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, today introduced the Environmental Hormone Disruption Act and the Women's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Act - two key pieces of legislation that aim to increase research in order to better understand how environmental factors affect women's health. By expanding research, we could prevent and treat a broad range of diseases and disorders in future generations.

"These bills are critical in understanding the impact of our environment on women's health," said Rep. Slaughter. **"Research has already shown that exposure to certain synthetic chemicals disrupts hormone function and contributes to increased incidences of diseases. It is vital that we continue to study and understand the impact of hormone disrupting chemicals, so we can prevent the unintended consequences on women's health."**

"More than 80,000 chemicals have been introduced into our environment over the last 50 years. At the same time, we've seen increases in many diseases and disorders - including childhood cancers, testicular cancer, juvenile diabetes, thyroid disorders, learning disabilities, cognitive impairments and autoimmune disorders over the last 30 years. In order to prevent further damage to our nation's public health, we must expand our research programs that examine the affects of these chemicals on the human body," concluded Slaughter.

"We applaud Congresswoman Slaughter for her leadership in introducing these historic measures," said Jeanne Rizzo, RN, executive director of the Breast Cancer Fund. "This legislation is critical to helping us better understand the environmental links to the increasing rates of breast cancer, as well as to other pressing women's health concerns."

There are some basic reasons why women are more prone to negative affects from environmental toxins. Women are typically smaller than men, and therefore toxins have a greater impact. Additionally, women have a high proportion of fatty tissue, where toxins accumulate.

At the same time, there are many serious questions regarding women's health that need to be further studied and researched. For example, a women's lifetime risk of breast cancer is 1 in 7 today, compared to 1 in 22 in the 1940s – over half of the cases are unexplained. It is important to find the root of this disturbing increase in breast cancer and determine any important environmental risk factors.

We do know that about 100,000 chemicals are registered for use in the United States. However, 90 percent of these have never been fully tested for their impact on human health. While the evidence is mounting that there is an association between these chemicals and hormone disruption, research remains limited, particularly on the impact on women.

The Environmental Hormone Disruption Act will authorize the director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to establish a comprehensive program to better understand the impact of hormone disrupting pollutants in the environment on the health of women and children. The Women's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Act will authorize the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to provide grants to up to 6 multidisciplinary research centers regarding environmental factors that affect women's health, and the health of their offspring.

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